



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Introduction

The Department of the Interior, actively engaged in collaborative and partnering activities for many years, has expanded its efforts under Executive Order 13352. The Department is incorporating cooperative conservation as an essential way of doing business to accomplish our mission. The activities described below range from a partnership training video to a coalition dedicated to restoring forests on coal mined lands. Our wide-ranging cooperative activities demonstrate that our bureaus and offices fully embrace the principles embodied in the Executive Order. We have grouped the accomplishments under these main headings: Knowledge Building, Strengthening Employee Skills, Improving Management Accountability, and Embracing Cooperative Conservation.

Knowledge Building

Updated Partnership Legal Primer

The Department published its Partnership Legal Primer in September 2004 to provide bureaus and offices, as well as current and potential partners, an authoritative source for legislative authorities related to partnerships. Posted on the web, the Primer is considered a best practice for guiding partnership efforts. A significant portion of the Primer involves partnering mechanisms, such as grants or cooperative agreements, memoranda of understanding, and statutory partnerships. In December 2005, the Department issued Donations Guidelines through a Departmental Manual Chapter. The Primer is being updated to include the donation guidance.

Partnership Training Video

Featuring Interior employees, a new 20-minute video, *Together We Can: the Importance of Partnerships*, emphasizes the importance of partnerships in advancing cooperative conservation. A cross-bureau team developed the video to be used at management meetings, new employee orientations, in partnership training courses and other venues to ensure that Interior employees understand the importance of partnerships and cooperation in achieving all aspects of the Department's mission. The video, distributed on DVD, will also be available through the DOI cooperative conservation web pages.

Children and Nature Conference

Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods*, chronicles the many problems impacting our nation's children brought on by an increasing disconnection from nature. Problems such as obesity and diabetes, attention disorders and low educational achievement are linked in part to a lack of play and connection to the outdoors. A national conference sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service, The Conservation Fund and author, Richard Louv, was held at the National Conservation Training Center on Sept. 7-10, 2006, to bring together experts and partners from all sectors of society to discuss and commit to

addressing this national problem. The Conference has resulted in the formation of a national Children and Nature Network and a proposal for a Children and Nature Forum to bring focused, cooperative national attention to this issue and to raise \$20 million for 20 community-based projects generated by the conference.

Adaptive Management Guidelines

A Department-wide Adaptive Management Working Group, formed in May 2005, is examining adaptive management processes as an approach to applying science to management of lands and resources. Adaptive management holds significant promise as a framework to promote more creative, cooperative management that enables agencies to incorporate new information into ongoing land management practices. The work group has written a technical guide that describes how to implement adaptive management most effectively, with specific emphasis on DOI managers and field practitioners. The Departmental guidelines identify appropriate operational requirements for implementing adaptive management, inventory and monitoring protocols, and guidance for integrating adaptive management with NEPA, Endangered Species Act and other legal requirements. An adaptive management training program and Departmental adaptive management website are also being developed in support of this effort.

National Conservation Leadership Institute

The Fish and Wildlife Service, with many partners, is developing and implementing the National Conservation Leadership Institute. The inaugural class of 35 emerging leaders completed the first phase of the program at the National Conservation Training Center in November 2006. The Institute will develop the leadership competencies of emerging leaders from many sectors of the natural resource community, including federal and state government land management agencies, Native American tribes, not-for-profit conservation organizations, and natural resource and recreation-based corporations. Through the Institute, these natural resource leaders will also build a trusting, cross-sector network of communication and cooperation so that resource issues of the future can be resolved more collaboratively.

Strengthening Employee Skills

Interior Puts Emphasis on Competencies for Collaboration

Like other Federal agencies, Interior is shifting to a competency-based human resources management system that will improve our ability to hire the right people, train them, and reward their performance. Like the other cooperative conservation agencies, we have identified eight of the OPM-approved competencies that are critical for employees who need to partner, collaborate and work cooperatively with others to achieve mission goals, especially in Cooperative Conservation. In September 2006, the Department approved a policy that establishes requirements for developing and implementing competency-based human capital management and published, *Guidance for Integrating Competencies into Human Capital Processes*. The guide lays out the competency management framework for use in the Department of the Interior and the various ways human capital professionals, managers and employees can identify, acquire and use competencies. The

goal is to have competencies in general, and collaboration and partnering competencies in particular, better recognized and employed throughout the workforce.

Conflict Management Training for Interior Executives and Staff

Assessments of Interior's Senior Executive Service (SES) members revealed a conflict management competency gap. Recognizing that the ability of our employees to effectively manage and resolve conflict advances the goals of cooperative conservation, the Department has a comprehensive strategy for improving our conflict management competency. As part of that effort, a conflict management skills training workshop for senior managers was designed and offered 8 times throughout the country during the period August through October. A total of approximately 325 managers have participated so far, approximately 80 of whom are SES.

Collaboration and Partnership Training Tools

The Department, through a cross-bureau Partnership Training Team, has compiled an array of instructional materials and activities to help employees develop successful collaborative partnerships with public and private entities. These materials will help course coordinators and instructors from all DOI agencies support effective collaboration. These materials can be accessed from the DOI Cooperative Conservation website.

National Park Service-wide Partnership Training Needs Assessment

The National Park Service conducted an assessment of all National Park Service employees to determine their partnership knowledge, skills, and abilities; attitudes and beliefs toward partnerships, and perceptions of partnership training. The purpose of this study is to determine partnership training and development priorities for NPS employees by obtaining baseline data that will identify existing and future training needs of employees and partners associated with NPS partnerships work. Results of this study will be used to improve NPS training across occupational groups in dealing with partnerships.

Improving Management & Accountability

Cooperative Conservation Measures in the Strategic Plan

The Department's revised Government Performance and Results Act strategic plan (Fiscal Year 2007-2012) builds upon a vision for effective program performance through cooperative conservation. This vision reflects the Secretary's goal of involving others, including communities, Tribes, partners, customers, contractors, volunteers, and the interested public, in carrying out Interior's mission. Actively working with others to obtain their input and feedback will improve programs, processes, plans, and practices. External as well as internal cooperative conservation capacity measures were strengthened in the plan and will encourage collaboration with local citizens in conservation and resource discussions.

Departmental Cooperative Conservation Award

The Department's Cooperative Conservation Award recognizes actions that achieve environmental and natural resource goals in a manner that promotes cooperative

conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in Federal decision-making. The Cooperative Conservation Award was established to recognize cooperative conservation achievements that involve collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities that may include Federal, State, local and tribal governments, private, for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other non-governmental entities, and individuals. The first Cooperative Conservation awards were presented in May 2006 to 13 projects that included more than 89 partnering organizations, 10 individuals and 25 employees.

Conservation on Indian Lands

The Bureau of Indian Affairs and U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency have common objectives of communication, collaboration, cooperation, and consultation with agricultural producers, Indian landowners, and Indian tribes for managing and conserving natural resources on Indian lands. During 2006, the three agencies jointly developed a memorandum of understanding for the coordination, planning, and implementation of USDA conservation programs on Indian lands in an environmentally, culturally and economically sound manner. The agreement details how the three agencies will work together to ensure that all the USDA conservation programs are available to tribes and individual Indians, and to facilitate conservation program implementation.

Promoting the Use of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution

The Department has created an Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution (CADR) to establish the appropriate use of public engagement tools, collaborative approaches to planning, problem-solving and decision-making, and the effective use of conflict resolution processes as standard business practice in all areas. The CADR office is an important component of the Department's coordinated effort to advance the goals of cooperative conservation.

To ensure consistent and coordinated legal and policy guidance on the effective and appropriate use of these collaborative action and dispute resolution tools, the Office of the Solicitor (SOL) has established a full-time career position for a Senior Counsel for Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution reporting directly to the Solicitor. CADR and SOL are working together to build a model of collaborative leadership within the Department and to implement a joint strategic plan for building capacity to prevent, manage and resolve internal and external conflicts in order to reduce adverse impacts of unresolved conflicts and to reduce the cost and contentiousness of litigation.

Improving Conservation Grants Coordination

The Secretary has requested that Interior explore options for improving coordination of grant programs administered by the Department, both internally and with other agencies. A workgroup is developing initial information and options for review on how DOI can better coordinate the issuance of conservation grants, both among Interior agencies and eventually, with the other cooperative conservation agencies. Better coordination would leverage scarce resources to achieve greater conservation benefits.

Conservation, Partnerships, & Management Policy Position Created

The Department of the Interior has created a senior executive departmental position to oversee all aspects of conservation partnering and collaboration. The Director, Conservation, Partnerships & Management Policy, provides leadership for the Interagency Cooperative Conservation Team and the new Partners & Cooperation Team.

Partners & Cooperation Team Established

Formed in September 2006, the Partners & Cooperation Team provides a coordinated approach to Interior capacity building, drawing on the expertise and efforts of existing teams as well as engaging others to enhance the competencies and skills needed by our workforce to deliver Interior's mission. The team will ensure collaboration, communication and integration among ongoing efforts and will seek ways to share best practices and resources where appropriate. Members include a mix of headquarters and field representatives from bureaus and offices with program, budget, training, human resources, policy, legal and administrative expertise. The Partners & Cooperation Team reports to the Department's Management Initiatives Team, which is composed of deputy assistant secretaries and bureau deputy directors, to keep them abreast of partnership initiatives, challenges and accomplishments.

Interagency Cooperative Conservation Team

The Interagency Cooperative Conservation Team is advancing cooperative conservation through participation on Cooperative Conservation Task Force working groups and through leadership of several working groups: Workforce Transformation and Competencies, Training and Development, Measuring and Monitoring, and Strengthening Cross-Agency Collaboration. Interior continues to co-chair and staff the Interagency Cooperative Conservation Team in consultation with other agency representatives, and handled planning and logistics for team meetings, this year in Jacksonville, Florida, and Washington, D.C., and for regular telephone conferences. In 2007, we anticipate increasing involvement from the other agencies in leading the team and in adding new cross-agency work group representatives.

NPS Director's Order on Donations and Fundraising

In 2006, the National Park Service revised its policy guidance on how the agency is to continue a time-honored tradition of private-sector support for America's national parks. The original policy was revised to conform to the new Departmental Donation Guidelines, to address concerns of the General Accountability Office, and respond to our partners' concerns that the previous policy did not encourage philanthropy. In revising the policy, the NPS engaged with citizens and organizations and made the draft available for public comment. Over 1,000 comments were received. The draft received extensive press coverage and was a topic at congressional hearings. Training has been conducted for the field and partner organizations.

Embracing Cooperative Conservation

Enhancing Science in Cooperative Conservation

Underground Mine Map Initiative

Underground mine maps provide vital information for engineers, scientists, community and transportation planners, developers, and regulators for making decisions on land use development, property purchase, and environmental protection. The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) developed an Underground Mine Map Initiative and during 2005, hosted a benchmarking workshop with the Interstate Mining Compact Commission and created a partnership to further the preservation, archiving, and distribution of underground mine maps between OSM, Interstate Mining Compact Commission, and in turn, coal mining state agencies. In FY 2006, OSM dedicated funding for the Underground Mine Map Initiative, received 19 proposals from various state agencies and was able to totally or partially fund 13 proposals. An example project is Virginia's plan to acquire, preserve, and geo-reference a library of mine maps that lie within the vicinity of what will be the multi-billion dollar "Coal Fields Expressway." Virginia intends to use the geo-referenced maps as a tool to layout and design the expressway in a way that will ultimately reduce or eliminate future road maintenance issues as a result of abandoned mine subsidence.

Global Delta and Large River Science Network

USGS National Wetlands Research Center sponsored a Lower Mississippi Valley (LMV) Conceptual Framework Workshop in June 2006 that brought together Federal, State, and university scientists with expertise in hydrology, biology, biogeochemistry and ecology. The Lower Mississippi Valley is the largest floodplain in the United States. The alteration and degradation of the forest and wetland ecosystems have resulted in the large-scale loss of many ecosystem functions and services. This workshop is the first step in developing a conceptual model to synthesize current understanding of ecosystem processes, environmental gradients and linkages among systems in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

Sage Grouse Local Working Group Locator

Over the past few years, many organizations have spent resources to address recovery of the greater sage grouse and restoration of its sagebrush ecosystem. The involvement of community-based sage grouse conservation teams or Local Working Groups is critical to the success of conserving this species and habitat. Over 60 groups have been established in 11 western states and 2 Canadian provinces. Local Working Group members represent farmers, ranchers, state and federal agency staff, tribal and local governments, energy industry, environmental groups, non-government organizations, and other concerned citizens. The conservation efforts of Local Working Groups contributed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision not to list the species under the Endangered Species Act.

A consolidated resource was needed to bring together relevant data and information from, and for sharing by, all of these groups. In collaboration with Utah State University, the USGS-National Biological Information Infrastructure released the Sage Grouse Local Working Group Locator to promote information sharing about sage grouse conservation efforts throughout the western United States in June 2006. The Locator is a Web-based, geographically linked database to identify leads and participants, the location of Local Working Groups across the west, links to relevant conservation strategies, as well as what types of projects and conservation efforts have been identified in specific areas.

Creating a Volunteer Network for Weed Data Collection

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needs statistically sound, cost-efficient surveys on invasive plants and animals on over 500 refuges in the United States. USGS researchers developed sampling protocols, trained refuge staff, and advised volunteers from the local community to gather extensive field data on high-priority weeds in the Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. They also gathered plot data to create maps and models of key invaders and to guide further surveys. They created a generalized protocol entitled *The Art and Science of Weed Mapping* (in press), which will be used by several additional refuges across the country next year. Creating networks of trained volunteers for invasive species surveys is the first step in creating a cost-efficient early detection and rapid response program in the National Refuge System.

Strengthening Partnerships in Conservation

Sporting Conservation Council Formed

In February 2006, the Department of the Interior established the 12-member Sporting Conservation Council (a FACA advisory body) to provide advice and guidance on resource conservation issues of interest to the hunting community. The Council will provide input on wildlife conservation endeavors that benefit hunting and wildlife resources and that encourage partnerships among members of the public, the sportsmen-conservation community, wildlife conservation groups, state and federal governments.

The council includes representatives from state fish and wildlife agencies; wildlife conservation organizations; game bird organizations; big game and general hunting communities. Council members, who will serve two-year terms without compensation, held their inaugural meeting in August. The council charter was recently amended to include the Department of Agriculture.

Service First Serves Cooperative Conservation

Since Congress approved the Service First initiative in 1998, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service have been working together to provide seamless service to the public, to promote quality natural resource stewardship and greater operational efficiency. Service First is considered a best practice in advancing cooperative conservation principles because it allows Federal agencies to manage “one landscape” and to provide more efficient services for customers and partners. Through collocations, joint resource management projects and one-stop shopping for firewood, recreation, and other casual use permits, the agencies are delivering cooperative conservation on the ground. Collocating offices makes it easier for the public to obtain Federal services and it also allows the agencies to work together more effectively. The BLM and Forest Service have collocated 61 offices, including seven over the past two years (Meeker, Dickerson, Grants Pass, Coeur D’Alene, Marietta, Albany, and San Diego). In several areas, collocations have also incorporated National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and USGS personnel, as well as other Federal agencies.

Consensus Reached on Chiloquin Dam Removal

Resource management agencies and private interests have long identified Chiloquin Dam as an impediment to spawning migrations and potential recovery of two federally listed fish species and other fish species of concern in the Upper Klamath Basin of Oregon. The dam is the point of diversion for the Modoc Point Irrigation District, a small irrigation district near Chiloquin, Oregon.

A coalition of interested parties that included federal, tribal, state, and local agencies, non-profit organizations, and concerned members of the community was formed in 2003 to discuss and recommend a preferred option to remedy fish passage problems at Chiloquin Dam. Through regular discussions and ongoing research, the coalition decided that dam removal was the preferred option to improve fish passage in the Sprague River.

In 2006, the members of the Modoc Point Irrigation District accepted the coalition recommendation for dam removal with assurances that irrigation water will be provided through the new Williamson River pumping station and voted to remove Chiloquin Dam. The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, with support from other federal agencies, will fund construction of the pumping station and removal of Chiloquin Dam. Construction of the pumping station is scheduled to begin in 2007, with dam removal planned for 2008.

Friends of Hurricane Creek

Local citizens in Tuscaloosa County, AL, believed that the 200-square-mile Hurricane Creek watershed was “a stream worth fighting for,” its beauty undiminished despite high unemployment, poverty, acid mine drainage, and abandoned mine sites. Friends of Hurricane Creek, based out of Birmingham, AL, formed seven years ago in response to these and other water-quality threats. To strengthen their organization, the Friends applied for a volunteer through the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team, an innovative partnership between the VISTA program and the Office of Surface Mining. Sponsored by Alabama Rivers, Hurricane Creek’s VISTA was charged with strengthening the organization’s board and infrastructure. Armed with new organizational capacity, the Friends recently celebrated a major victory, the first repeal of a mining permit in the state’s history. Engaged in building its board of directors and enjoying a strengthening of membership, Friends of Hurricane Creek now believes it will be self-sufficient by summer 2007.

Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative

The Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) is a coalition of diverse groups dedicated to restoring forests on coal mined lands in the Eastern United States. ARRI was started in December 2003 with the formation of a Core Team comprised of the Department of Interior’s Office of Surface Mining and State government agencies that regulate coal mining in Kentucky, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Accomplishments since ARRI began include 210 signatories to the Statement of Mutual Intent (and growing every week); the creation of a national academic team representing prominent forestry researchers from 11 universities and the U.S. Forest Service; tree planting events in all of the participating States; funding of cooperative agreements to promote reforestation research; developing training modules

for Federal and state personnel and the public on the benefits of restoring forests and the techniques to do so; establishing annual reforestation reclamation awards; promoting the initiative through various workshops or meetings; and the creation of promotional materials for outreach (pamphlets, newsletters, and a website <http://arri.osmre.gov/>).

National Fish Habitat Action Plan

Announced in April 2006, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan is a nationwide strategy to improve the condition of aquatic habitat by harnessing the energies, expertise and existing partnerships of state and federal agencies, the private sector and conservation organizations. With the Fish and Wildlife Service as the lead federal agency, more than 500 organizations have signed on as partners. A National Fish Habitat Board was recently established to provide oversight.

The plan is a rallying point for a wide range of fish and aquatic habitat interest groups, partners. It contains extensive input from numerous partners, state fish and wildlife agency leaders, and 19 federal agencies that are coordinating their activities to support the plan. With its strong base of support, its focus on the use of existing and emerging science, and its emphasis on the importance of partnerships, the plan presents a historic opportunity to launch a new era in fisheries conservation. Several pilot projects are underway (see <http://fishhabitat.org/action.htm>).

Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

In May 2004, President Bush launched the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration of National Significance, thereby initiating a unique partnership of members from federal, state, and local governments, tribes, and others to develop a strategic plan to protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem. Numerous federal agencies are participating, including representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, the EPA, and U.S. Geological Survey. All Great Lakes states, as well as 35 federally recognized tribes, are also participating. More than 1,500 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, as well as the public, worked to complete the 2005 *Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*. The strategy is now driving federal and non-federal actions, including a significant effort to protect and restore the wetlands around the Great Lakes, the loss of more than half of which has resulted in the elimination of ecosystem services such as hydrologic flows and flood controls, nutrient and sediment trapping, and habitat for fish, wildlife and bird populations. The Collaboration is implementing the 48 near-term actions identified in the Strategic Plan.

Partnering with States on Gulf of Mexico Action Plan

In March 2006, the States of Texas, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana, and Alabama, which have formed the Gulf Alliance, announced a plan to improve the quality of the coast and waters in the Gulf. The plan was announced on March 28 at the State of the Gulf of Mexico Summit hosted by the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University, in Corpus Christi, Texas. Several Federal agencies, including Interior, EPA, NOAA and USDA (the Federal Workgroup) participated in the Summit and are partners in the implementation of the plan, primarily through technical and staff support. The plan includes several specific projects related to the five priority issues identified as

regionally significant and that can be effectively addressed through increased collaboration at state, local, and federal levels. These include: improvement in Gulf water quality, with an emphasis on healthy beaches and shellfish beds; restoration and conservation of coastal wetlands; environmental education; identification and characterization of Gulf habitats to inform management decisions; and reductions in nutrient loading. The Governors' Action Plan is a starting point for effective regional collaboration, setting the stage for a long-term partnership to create a healthier Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and economy.

Achieving Cooperative Conservation Results

Participation after Hurricanes: Response to Oil and Hazardous Materials Spills

Because of Hurricanes Katrina, Wilma and Rita, a great number of oil and hazardous material spills occurred along the Gulf Coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, releasing an estimated 7.7 million gallons of oil or oil products. The Department's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) coordinated DOI's participation and response efforts for these hurricane-related spill incidents. OEPC provided the technical expertise to the Coast Guard's Federal On-Scene Coordinators to protect or restore impacted DOI lands and resources.

Utah Partners for Conservation and Development

The Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UPCD) have made managing and restoring Utah's watershed restoration a top priority for their agencies and groups. Funding to support the initiative is unique in that it is "pooled" into an account managed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and matched by a number of sources. For example, in 2005 the Utah State Legislature funded the initiative for \$2 million. The UPCD partners and friends of the initiative had pooled their resources, bringing the totals for 2005 to about \$8 million, which allowed the initiative to physically treat 125,000 acres in FY 2005. The Utah BLM contributed \$600,000 to the effort, yet benefited by treatments on nearly half of the statewide acres treated. That equates to a ratio greater than 7:1 for the BLM investment.

Statewide efforts to address NEPA, Science, Monitoring and Outreach are also ongoing. The initiative continues to gain support and momentum as over \$9 million was raised for work in FY 2006. Twenty nine projects were proposed to be completed on BLM administered land. Approximately 37,000 acres were improved. In total, 150,000 acres were addressed statewide. Long-term plans include a goal to treat 1 million acres by the end of 2008.

Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program

The Collaborative Program comprises 21 Federal, State, local and tribal governments, nonprofit institutions, and other nongovernmental entities working collaboratively to protect and improve the status of endangered listed species along the Middle Rio Grande while protecting existing and future regional water uses and complying with state and

federal laws, including Rio Grande Compact delivery obligations. The Program implements activities required by the March 2003 Biological Opinion, as amended, and additional activities that contribute to recovery of the Rio Grande silvery minnow (silvery minnow) and the Southwestern willow flycatcher (flycatcher).

During 2006, habitat restoration projects restored and enhanced habitat in the Middle Rio Grande by increasing backwaters, oxbows, and over-bank flooding to enhance native vegetation and regenerate stands of cottonwoods and willows for the flycatcher; producing shallow, low-velocity habitats over a wide range of instream flows to increase habitat available for the silvery minnow; and providing for fish passage upstream of diversion dams.

MARINE – Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network

MARINE is a partnership of Federal, State and local agencies, universities and private organizations interested in determining the health of the rocky intertidal communities along the Pacific shoreline. Organized and managed by Minerals Management Service, MARINE currently includes 40 partners who collectively monitor key species such as mussels, barnacles, abalone and seastars at 80 rocky intertidal sites every fall and spring. MARINE also conducts comprehensive biodiversity surveys at 91 rocky intertidal sites from Alaska to Mexico on a rotating basis. MARINE works with managers from local, state and federal governments to provide the scientific information needed to make decisions about coastal resources.

MARINE data, shared on a common database, led to the closure of the black abalone fishery on the mainland and are used by the State to evaluate impacts to the shoreline from non-point discharges. In addition to its web site (<http://www.marine.gov/>), MARINE has published curriculum for K-8, high school and a university textbook.

Carbon Sequestration on Refuge Lands

FWS is working with non-profit conservation organizations and private corporations to restore native forest habitat on refuge lands through carbon sequestration partnerships. The Service and its partners recognize that reforestation and management of refuge lands will provide benefits to the American public by removing significant amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and by improving the ecological integrity of our Nation's land, water, and native habitats for both wildlife and people. In 2006, carbon sequestration projects were completed at Tensas River, Red River, Catahoula, Chickasaw, and Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuges, resulting in reforestation of more than 9,600 acres of refuge lands, of which approximately 7,800 acres were donated to the Service in fee simple.

Protecting Greater Sage Grouse through Partnerships

The Bureau of Land Management keeps pace with the country's energy needs and demands and must also protect wildlife and their habitats. The greater sage grouse presents a particularly significant challenge. Sixty-four percent of its habitat is under Federal management. In addition to sage grouse, sagebrush habitat supports significant numbers of plants and animals, including species that are candidates for listing or are

already federally listed threatened or endangered species. The BLM, collaborating with USGS and FWS, and with the support of State, local governments, tribal governments, and various interest groups is working to accelerate habitat protection and restoration projects on a landscape scale in six focus areas in the West. The partners are focusing on habitat protection and restoration efforts in wildlife-energy interface areas and in critical sagebrush habitat to improve the health of the landscape and to avert the listing of species.

In one project to enhance seasonal sage-grouse habitat in Wyoming, the Bureau of Land Management partnered with Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife, Marathon Oil, and grazing permittees to treat approximately 865 acres of dense, monotypic sagebrush communities with a rotary mower to achieve a 30 percent treatment within a 2,885-acre block between August 1, 2005, and February 28, 2006. It also provided for a mosaic of different seral stages of sagebrush communities across the landscape, while leaving patches of sagebrush with optimum size and structure for sage-grouse nesting habitat. In 2006, nationally, BLM treated 459,583 acres of shrub/grasslands.

Working with California Communities to Fight Wildland Fire

For details, see [A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan](#) on page 31 of this report.

President's Wetlands Initiative

On Earth Day 2004, President George W. Bush embarked upon a new Federal policy to go beyond “no net loss” of wetlands and attain an overall increase in the quality and quantity of wetlands in America. The President described his goal for expanding wetland acreage as both creating new wetlands and improving the quality of existing wetlands. The President’s wetland initiative is to restore, improve, or protect 3,000,000 acres of wetlands by Earth Day 2009. After two years of progress, the team of five Federal departments -- Commerce (NOAA), Interior, Agriculture, Defense (Army Corps), Transportation and EPA, with the help of multiple states, communities, tribes, and private landowners is on track to meet or exceed this goal. Between Earth Day 2004 and Earth Day 2006, 1,797,000 acres of wetlands have been restored or created, improved, or protected.

Engaging Partners for Conservation in Southern Nevada

The Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (SNAP) was formed in 1997 to meet the challenges of unprecedented growth in Southern Nevada. Partner agencies include the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service. SNAP works together with many partners to conserve and enhance the federal lands in Southern Nevada. 14 interagency teams manage most SNAP activities.

In 2006, some of the accomplishments of SNAP with their partners include the launch of the interagency “Don’t Trash Nevada” campaign including interagency messages, logo,

radio commercials and movie ads; monitoring over 100 sensitive cultural resource sites utilizing over 200 highly trained interagency site steward volunteers; incorporation of a “Responsible Off-Highway Vehicle Use” training program into local high school Driver’s Education courses reaching over 20,000 students; six interagency law enforcement patrols with over 300 incidents recorded at one event alone; over 150,000 hours of service by volunteers on federal lands with a value of more than \$2.2 million managed through the interagency volunteer program.